

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS).

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask the House of Representatives to pass S. 1167, the Senate companion to H.R. 2304. This legislation provides a mechanism for the Forest Service and the Army Corps of Engineers to resolve boundary conflicts between the Mark Twain National Forest and adjacent private landowners. The dispute over boundaries stems from recent surveys conducted by contractors to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which have frequently been found to be severely flawed by the State.

The measure sets a process for dealing with the disputed boundaries. A landowner would notify the Secretary of Agriculture of a disputed boundary, prompting a new land survey. If the Secretary determines the boundary conflict is the result of a reliance on a previous land survey, the land in dispute can be returned to the private property owner.

It is important to note that the bill does not require the conveyance of any particular lands. Where a new survey shows that the lands in question were surveyed improperly, the Forest Service can either execute a quit claim to the land, assert Federal ownership if the Federal Government has improved the land, or compensate the landowner for the land.

This is a case where the Federal Government has not exercised adequate due diligence in maintaining their land surveys to the detriment of their neighbors. Rather than redrawing map boundaries from Washington, we are creating a process where these folks can address their claims closer to home. The Committee on Agriculture regards this as an equitable solution to a local problem created by the Federal Government. I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

(Mr. DOOLEY of California asked and was given permission to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. DOOLEY of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of S. 1167, which seeks to correct a number of boundary conflicts that have occurred in the vicinity of the Mark Twain National Forest in Barry and Stone Counties, Missouri.

The boundary conflicts at issue resulted from discrepancies between recent land surveys conducted by the U.S. Forest Service and decades-old surveys conducted by the Army Corps of Engineers. As a result of the more recent Forest Service land surveys, private property lines adjoining Federal lands were moved and private property landowners discovered that, due to their reliance on the older Army Corps of Engineers land surveys, they had in-

advertently trespassed on Federal lands.

S. 1167 will remedy these boundary conflicts by authorizing and directing either the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of the Army to convey title to U.S. Forest Service land on which private landowners can demonstrate that they inadvertently trespassed due to their innocent reliance on a previous inaccurate Federal survey, or relied on a survey based on a previous inaccurate survey.

This legislation largely mirrors H.R. 2304 which passed the House on November 17. While most of the differences between S. 1167 and H.R. 2304 are technical, S. 1167 gives the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of the Army more flexibility in resolving the boundary conflicts by explicitly allowing the appropriate Secretary to use existing authorities to resolve the conflicts, in addition to the process outlined in the legislation.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation so that these boundary conflicts can be resolved.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT), the distinguished majority whip.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friends both for supporting this bill and the gentleman from Georgia for yielding to me to talk about it a few minutes.

This is a bill, as the gentleman from California said, that the House has passed at an earlier time. It does seem occasionally that even in a very small, local issue that it takes an act of Congress to resolve a problem that one would think that common sense would be able to resolve, but in this case that is not the case and it takes this bill, Senate bill 1167, to provide a speedy resolution to really a boundary dispute affecting private property owners in my district.

The historic boundary lines neighboring the Mark Twain National Forest and Table Rock Lake in Missouri's Barry County and Stone County were blurred when the U.S. Forest Service decided in the recent past to restore the mid-1800s Corners Program. The only problem with restoring this program is that nobody, including the Corps of Engineers, had paid any attention to it since the mid-1880s and land surveys conducted in the 1970s by and for the Corps of Engineers have found that major discrepancies would be the case if these old markers somehow became the rule of how property would be determined. Instead, property has been based on a 1950s survey when Table Rock Lake was built.

A fight with the Federal Government over a boundary line can really be an uphill battle, as we all know or could imagine. Don Ayers of Shell Knob in my district tells me that the Forest Service showed up on his property and moved his boundary by 30 feet. When

they did that they essentially repossessed his driveway, took part of his garage and an outbuilding on the land that he had every reason to believe he owned and clearly not only had paid taxes on but had made improvements, including those improvements that the Forest Service said now would belong to them once that boundary line was moved. Recognizable and verifiable boundary lines are essential to private property ownership.

This bill, sponsored by my colleague from Missouri, Senator BOND, sets a process for dealing with disputed boundaries in Barry and Stone Counties. As the gentleman from California said, we passed similar legislation in this body last November. This bill allows us to go ahead and get that job done.

The Federal Government already owns one-third of the Nation's land, and inaccuracies in Federal surveys should never force landowners to forfeit their property. I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense legislation.

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support S. 1167.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. BURNS) that the House suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill, S. 1167.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the Senate bill was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BURNS. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks on S. 1167, the Senate bill just passed.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Georgia?

There was no objection.

EXPRESSING SENSE OF THE HOUSE ON ESTABLISHING NATIONAL COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER WEEK

Mrs. MILLER of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 646) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that there should be established a National Community Health Center Week to raise awareness of health services provided by community, migrant, public housing, and homeless health centers.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 646

Whereas community, migrant, public housing, and homeless health centers are non-profit, community owned and operated health providers and are vital to the Nation's communities;